

[Sanford Levinson lecture on The American judicial system\(s\) as part of the political process, Tokyo Dec. 16, 2016](#)

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Type:

Lecture

Date:

December 16, 2016

Location:

Japan

Subject Fields:

American History / Studies, Japanese History / Studies, Law and Legal History, Political Science

The Contemporary Japan Group at the Institute of Social Science (ISS, or Shaken),

University of Tokyo, welcomes you to a lecture by

Sanford Levinson

(University of Texas)

The American judicial system(s) as part of the political process

DATE AND PLACE

Friday, December 16, 2016 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at Akamon Sōgō Kenkyūtō Room 549, Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo, Hongo Campus, University of Tokyo

ABSTRACT

Although political scientists have long emphasized the connection between courts (and, therefore "law") and politics, it is only in recent years that these connections have been assimilated into ordinary public discourse in the United States. A key issue in the recent election was dominance over the future of the United States Supreme Court. Controlling the Court, more than ever before, was seen as an linked to electoral success. Especially important, in this regard, is the fact of lifetime tenure coupled with the incentive to appoint relatively young justices. The overt politicization of the judiciary has become even more glaringly true with regard to the judges on state courts, which hear literally millions of more cases than do national courts. Most state judges are elected or otherwise

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politically accountable. The contrast with most other judicial systems in the world, including Japan's, is obvious. Whether reform is possible, assuming it is desirable, is doubtful, especially at the national level, because of the near impossibility of constitutional amendment.

SPEAKER

Sanford Levinson is a professor of law and government at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas. He is also currently a visiting professor at the Harvard Law School. The author of four books on aspects of the US Constitution, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Law and Courts Section of the American Political Science Association in 2010. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Science in 2001.

CONTEMPORARY JAPAN GROUP

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